PC POWER

"Come on baby, don't fear the reaper," croons the Blue Oyster Club in the theme tune to Gametek's latest interactive movie, *Ripper*, from American developers Take 2. You may remember Take 2 from their first horror game, *Hell*, which starred Grace Jones and Dennis Hopper and was set in a world ruled by demons. *Ripper* is not quite as extreme, but if anything, the violence implied by *Hell* has been increased and fully realised. The bad guy in *Ripper* is ten times more evil than Hopper's character.

Set in New York in the year 2046, the plot is that a number of particularly gruesome murders have taken place and the police have absolutely nada on the culprit. You are Jake Quinlan, a low-down reporter assigned to the case and the unfortunate recipient of the killer's correspondence (by e-mail of course, no-one uses paper in the 21st century).

It's the man they're all calling Mr Interactive Movie – Christopher Walken stars as Vincent Magnotta.

RIPPER

GAMETEK　TAKE2

release date **February '96**

ripper

Could this be a subtle hint as to the identity of the murderer?

The game is structured very much like *7th Guest* or *Myst* in that you wander around New York, exploring various locations by clicking the pointer in the required direction. As with many games of this ilk, the cursor changes shape when you wave it over sensitive areas, with a magnifying glass allowing you to examine items more closely. Adventurers of old will immediately take to the simple interface and certainly those who enjoyed *Hell* will bung it straight on the shopping list.

But the real draw of *Ripper* is the top quality acting from its real life stars, not least computer movie veteran Christopher Walken who seems to be in everything these days – doesn't the guy need sleep? When you enter a room with one of the actors present, a short filmic sequence takes place where you can interact at any time using one of the pre-set sentences. Once you've finished, a 2-D image of the person remains in the room in case you need to ask more questions (you are a reporter after

All right, fat bloke?

all), and while at first this is unsettling, you soon get used to it. What it does do is keep the main players within interrogating distance and the narrative flowing seamlessly.

Take 2 have invested $2.5 million and two years in *Ripper*. The game will come on four CDs, and for a company which hasn't before

Walken does a Bogart. Watch that coffee, sir.

Walken waves his hands around like a madman and utters cool quotable lines at every turn...

dabbled with FMV, they've certainly plunged into the deep end with over two hours of top movie action, including some stunning cyberspace sequences and scenes with Walken waving his hands around like a madman and uttering cool quotable lines at every turn.

Walken plays tough cop Vincent Magnotta (perilously close to his Vincent Calcotta character in *True Romance*) who hates Quinlan and also seems to be intrinsically linked to the killer. Walken is joined by a truly memorable supporting cast of some calibre. Karen Allen and John Rhys-Davis, both from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, feature heavily, as does the now ancient looking Burgess Meredith, Jimmy Walker, Ossie Davies and the fantastically gorgeous Tahnee Welch as the love interest.

Rumour has it that over a quarter of the game's budget was spent on the stars' fees, but as you can see from the demo on this month's coverdisk, it looks to have been well worth it. The intro alone is enough to give even the most hardened tough guy the heebie-jeebies. The first scream will have you reaching for the duvet.

"If you don't crack this case in 24 hours, the DA'll have my badge!" In all probability.

"Damn you all to hell, you finally did it!"

RIPPING YARNS

Ten facts you never knew about Jack the Ripper – he did exist y'know.

1. The Ripper murders took place in Whitechapel, London in 1888.

2. Only five women are thought to have been actual Ripper victims: Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly. Although at one time it was thought that he'd killed as many as 12!

3. After the first murder, a letter was sent to the Central News Agency on September 27 that claimed to be from the killer, which was signed "Jack the Ripper". The letter, although taken as gospel at the time, is now thought to have been written by a journalist.

4. All the victims were horribly mutilated and some organs removed and placed near the body. The final girl, Mary Jane Kelly, was found in her room and was the most ghastly due to the fact that the Ripper had had more time to work on her.

5. Suspects for the Ripper murders include Prince Albert Victor (Duke of Clarence), painter Walter Sickert, a polish immigrant Severin Klosowski and even an American surgeon named Francis Tumblety.
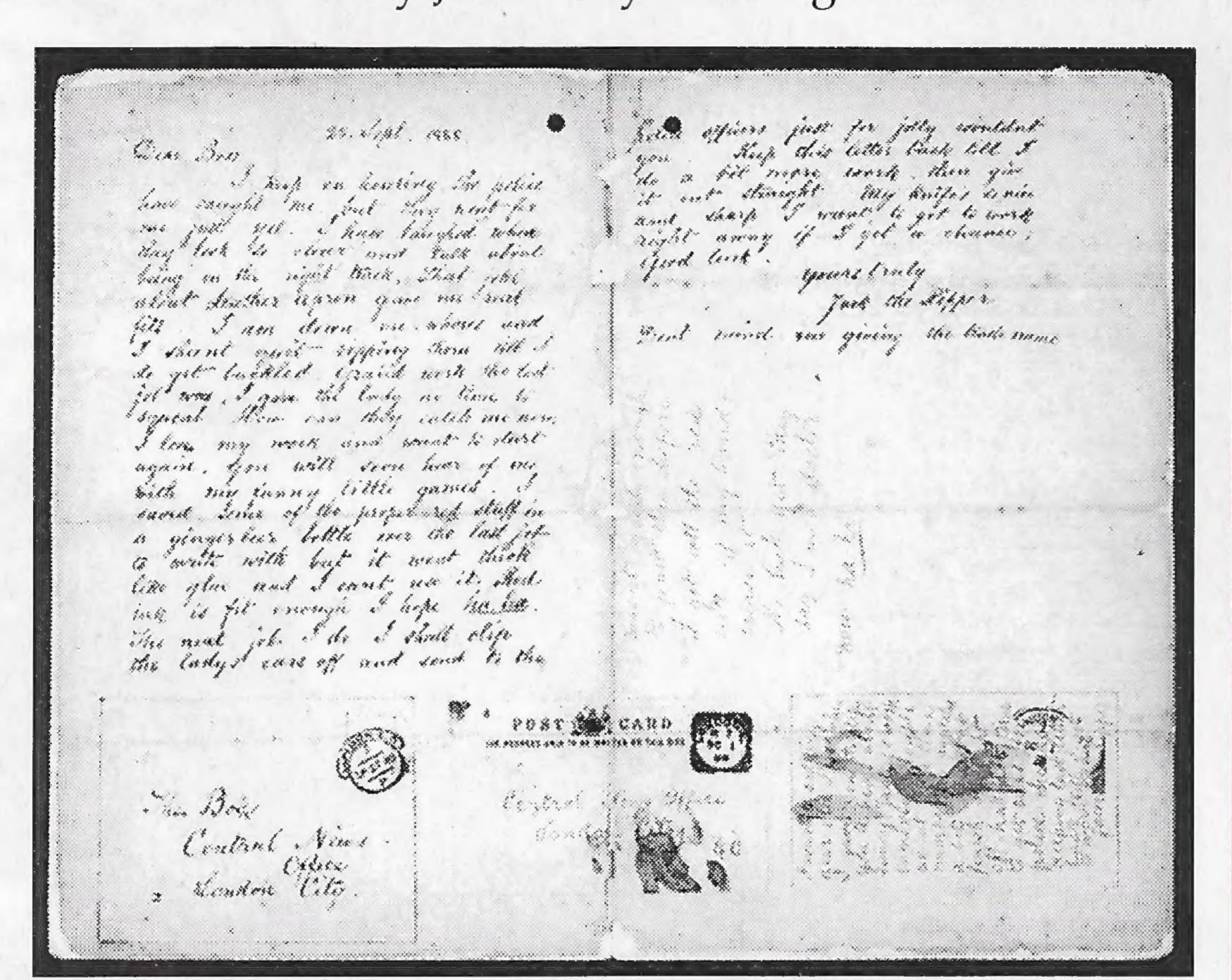
6. Jack the Ripper has featured in many different TV programs and films, most notably *Star Trek* and *Time After Time*, where he was played by David Warner
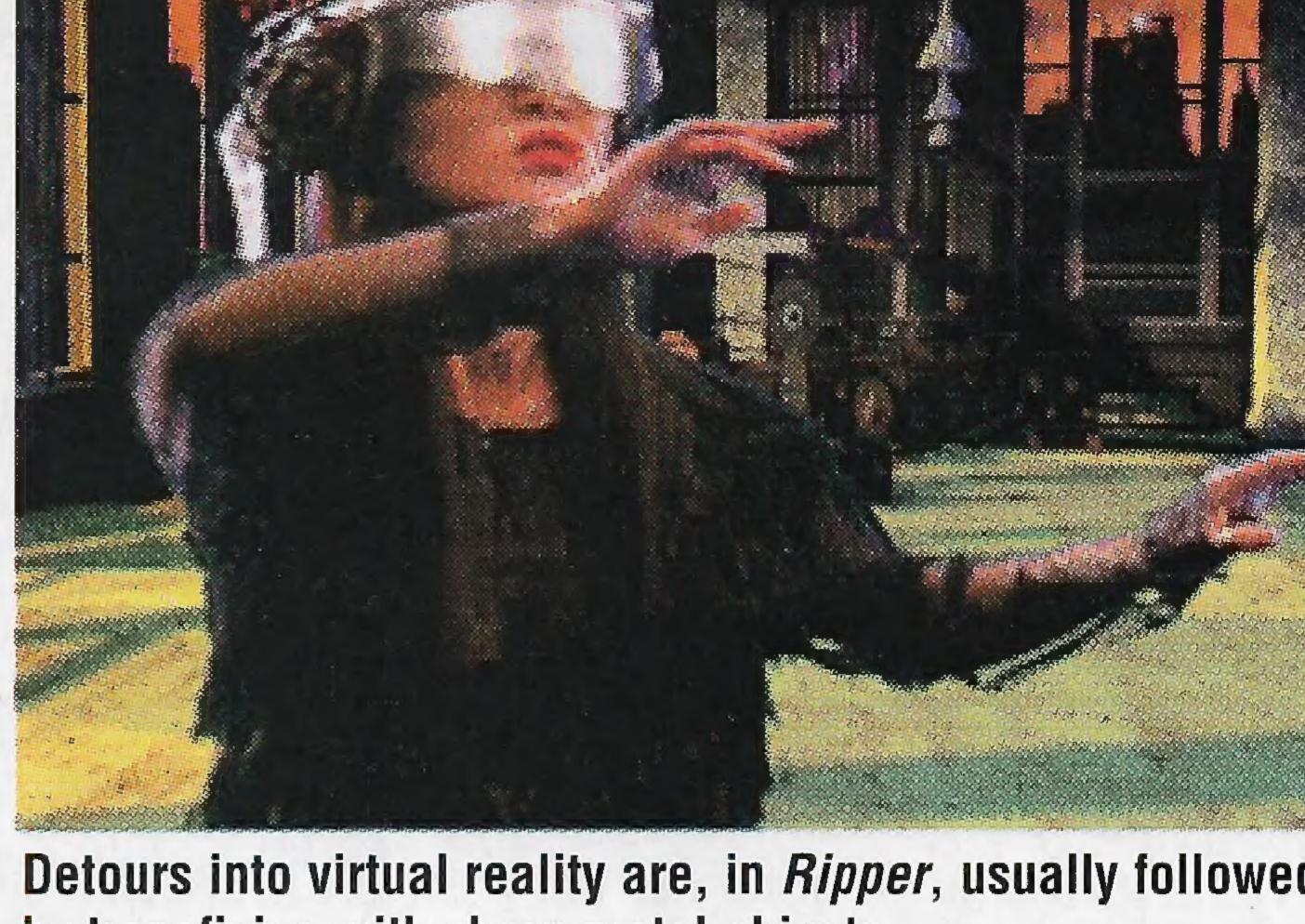
7. After the murder of Catherine Eddowes, a policeman found some writing on a wall in Goulston Street next to the blood stained apron of Eddowes. The writing is claimed to have said "The Juwes are the men That Will not be Blamed for nothing". Police at the time said it had nothing to do with the murder and was written to provoke racial incidents against the local Jewish community. It was never confirmed whether Jack the Ripper actually wrote the graffiti because the words were washed away before they could be photographed.

8. Every pathologist who examined the Ripper's victims concluded that the murder must have had medical knowledge to have removed selected organs with surgical precision.

9. Many of the documents pertaining to the case have now been accidentally destroyed or stolen for private auction.

10. The theories as to why Jack was never caught range from a Royal conspiracy to time travel and, of course, alien abduction.

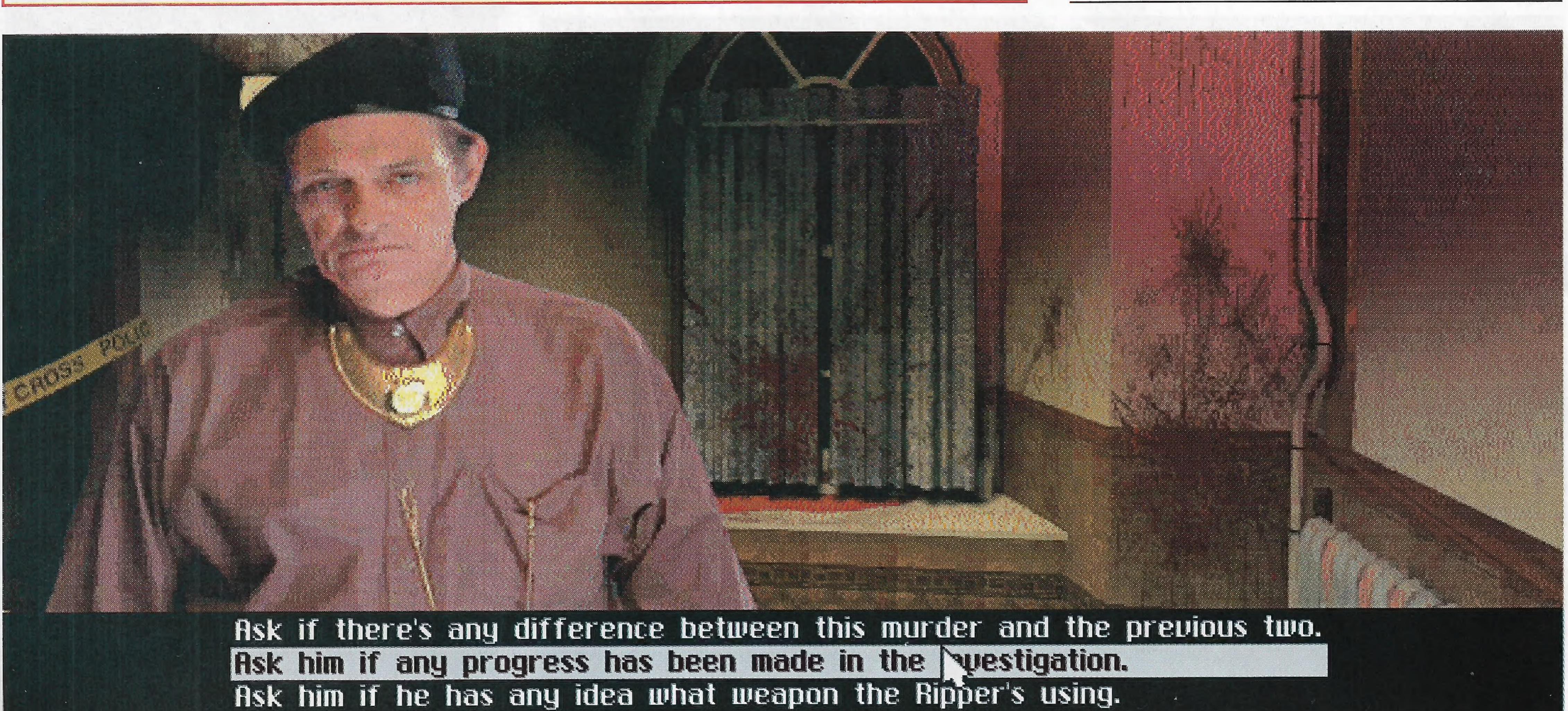Detours into virtual reality are, in *Ripper*, usually followed by transfixion with sharp metal objects.

But it's plot time again. Whilst investigating the most recent murder – blood caked walls, guts over carpet etc – Quinlan notices that the victim was logged onto a search for Jack the Ripper on her PC. After the customary tough guy routine from Magnotta, Jake gets a sinister message from the Ripper saying he's going after his partner, Catherine Powell, at *The Virtual Herald*. A chase ensues, but Jake's just too late, as the Ripper overcomes Catherine (curiously without anyone apart from the victim noticing him) and unfortunately sends her into a coma as a result of his aborted attempt. Cue enraged scene with Jake clutching the limp body of Caz and vowing to kill the Ripper if it's the last thing he ever does.

The script of *Ripper* is divided into a prologue, four acts and no doubt an epilogue in the fine Quinn Martin tradition, each section
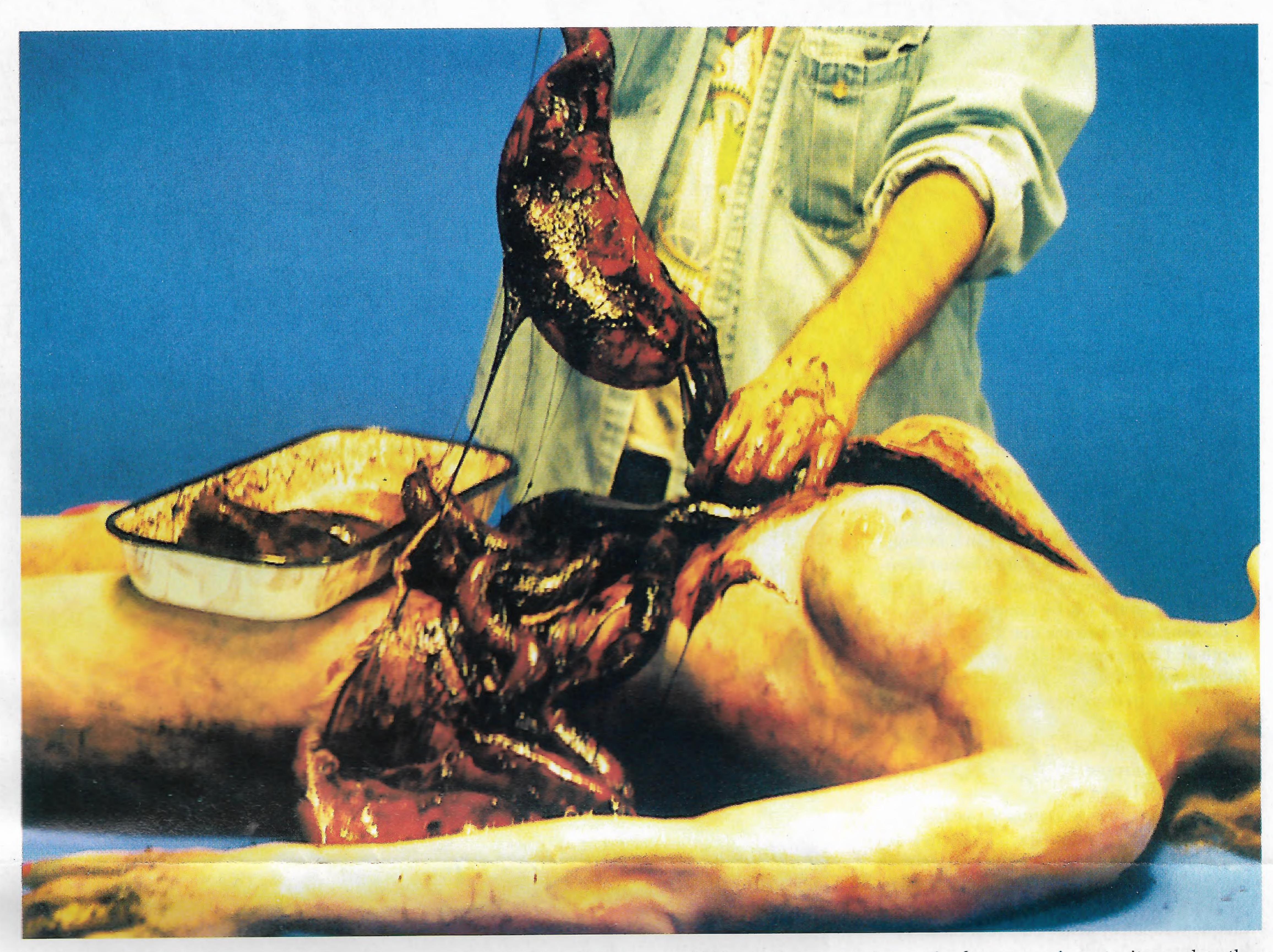
Have you any idea how much it costs to get a plumber out at this time of night? It ain't cheap.

Ask if there's any difference between this murder and the previous two.
Ask him if any progress has been made in the investigation.
Ask him if he has any idea what weapon the Ripper's using.

(one per CD methinks) has a cliff hanger that sends the plot (written by a Sundance Film Festival award winner, apparently) hurtling off in a completely different direction.

The Ripper murders soon turn out to have a strong connection with cyberspace (the victims are hacked apart by invisible blades while logged on). There's even a twist revealing that Magnotta, a cyber-surgeo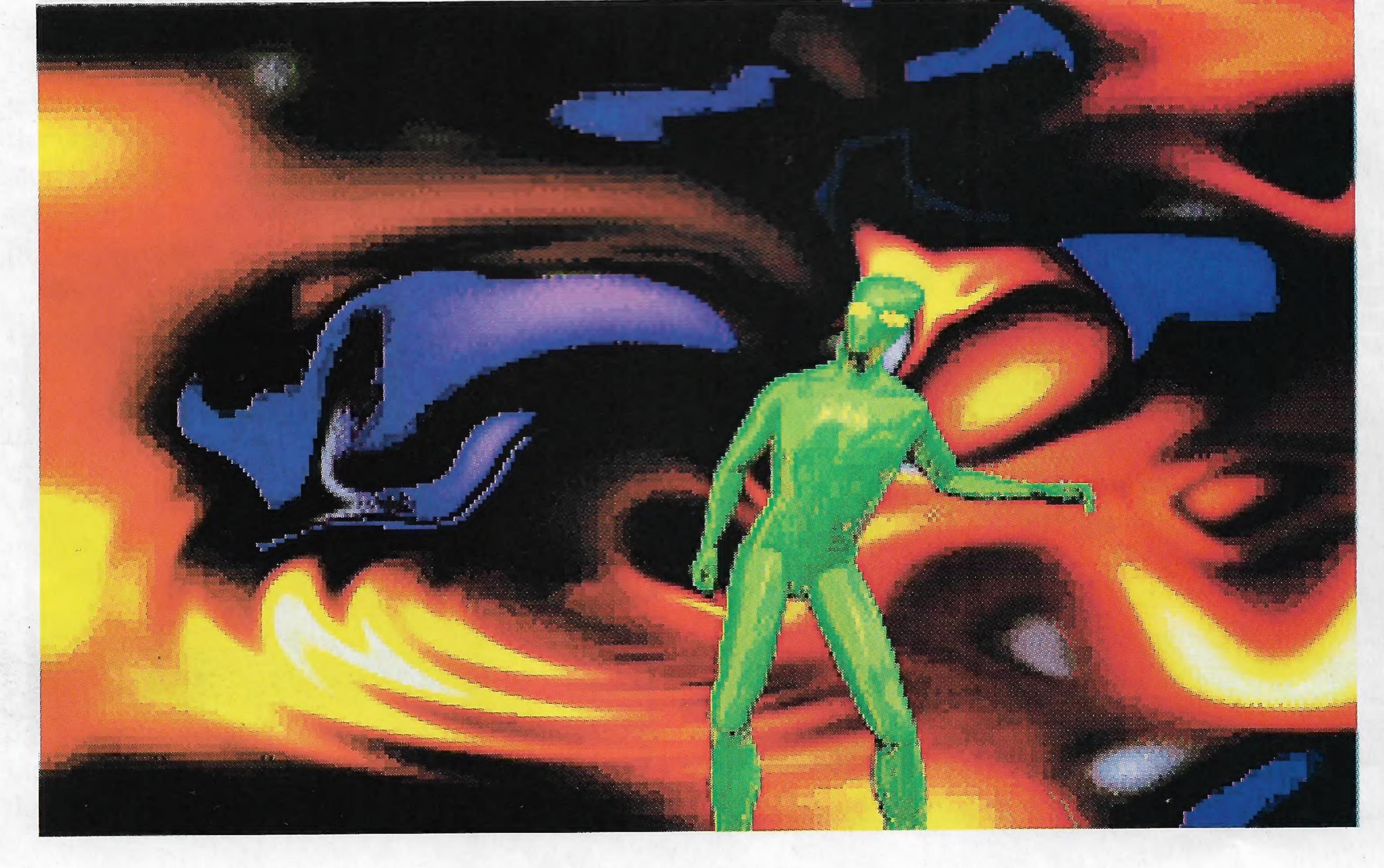n called Claire Burton, and an evil looking geezer with a wicked knife collection named Falconetti, were all once involved in a gang called the Web Riders who enacted Jack the Ripper murders in virtual reality, that is until someone actually got killed. Plenty of suspects then, but you can bet that the mad one with the knives isn't your man because that would be too obvious. Or maybe that's what the murderer wants you to think...
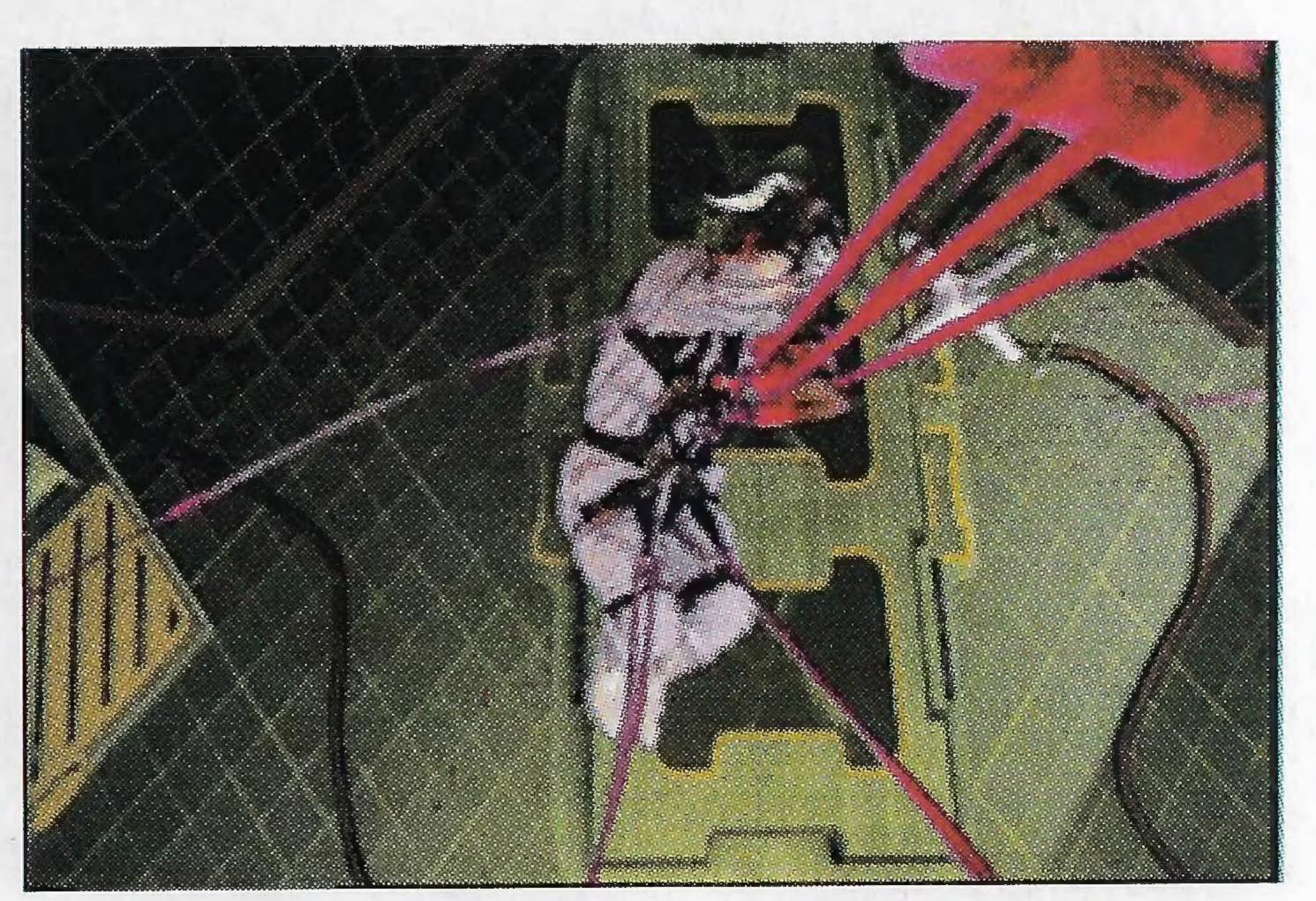
Ripper certainly looks to be one of the best interactive horror movies yet witnessed on the PC. The graphics depict the action in hi-res glory, with the camera panning in and out of important areas. The entire game, although set in New York, has a strangely Victorian aura about it. In fact all of the locations were painstakingly researched and decorated according to the real Ripper's time period.

But the real ace up *Ripper's* sleeve is the atmosphere of the whole game. The real Jack the Ripper remember was never caught, although many people were suspected at the time, including a member of the royal family, a doctor and even the impressionist painter, Walter Sickert, and so the entire Ripper mythology is still alive and kicking today.

Ripper from Gametek will be released in February and PC POWER will have the full review soon. Could this be the most terrifying interactive movie ever? From what we've seen so far the answer is definitely yes. ⏻
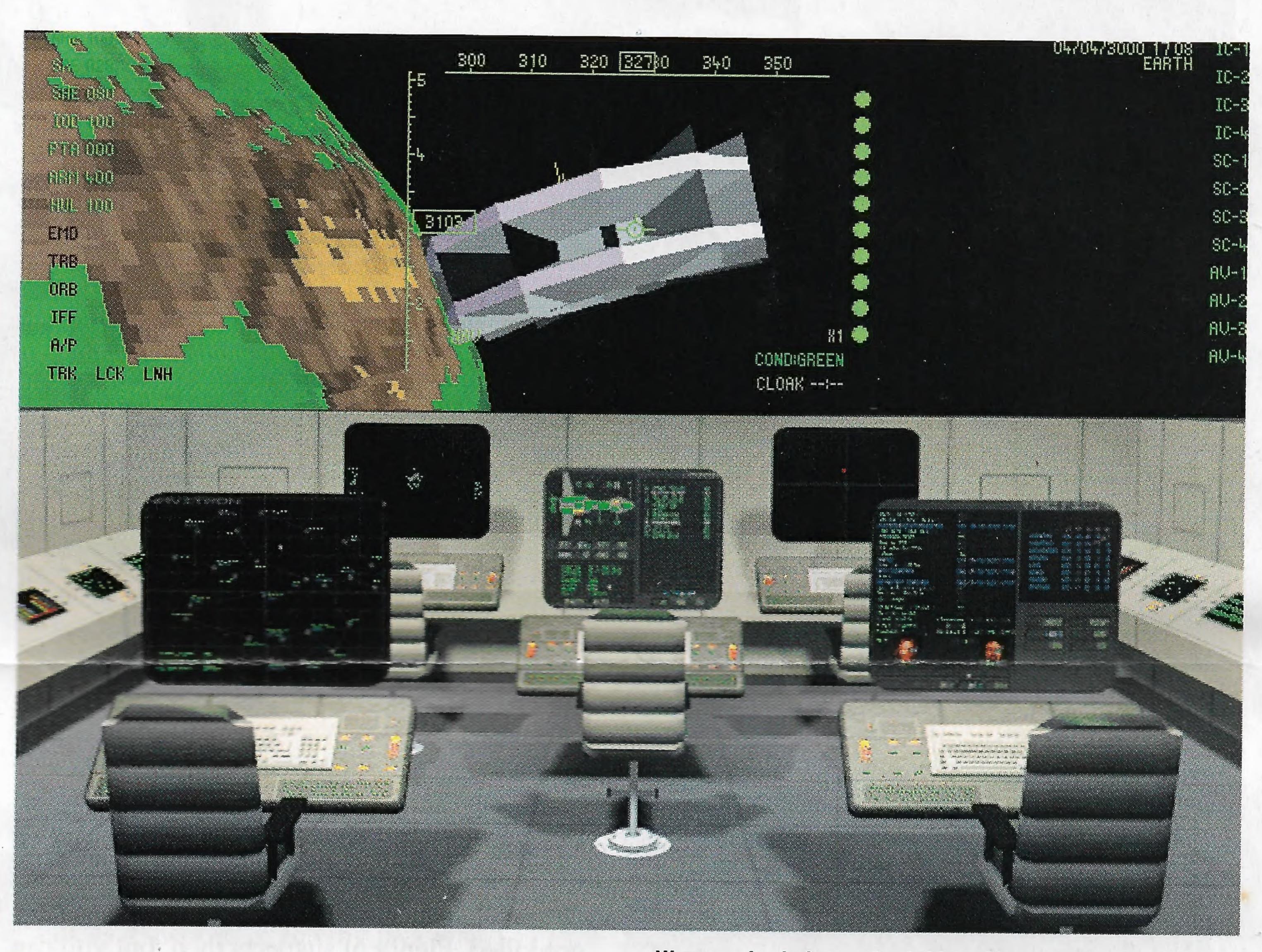
release date **January '96**

battlecruis

The latest space epic attempting to dethrone the *Elite* Odyssey is *Battlecruiser 3000AD*. More than four years in the making, with production costs spiralling to more than a million dollars, this galactic adventure has just been signed up by American Company Take 2, for distribution in the UK by Gametek.

Looking set to become one of the most in-depth and complex simulations ever – *Battlecruiser 3000AD* is a space/planetary flight simulator with more missions than WW1 and II combined!
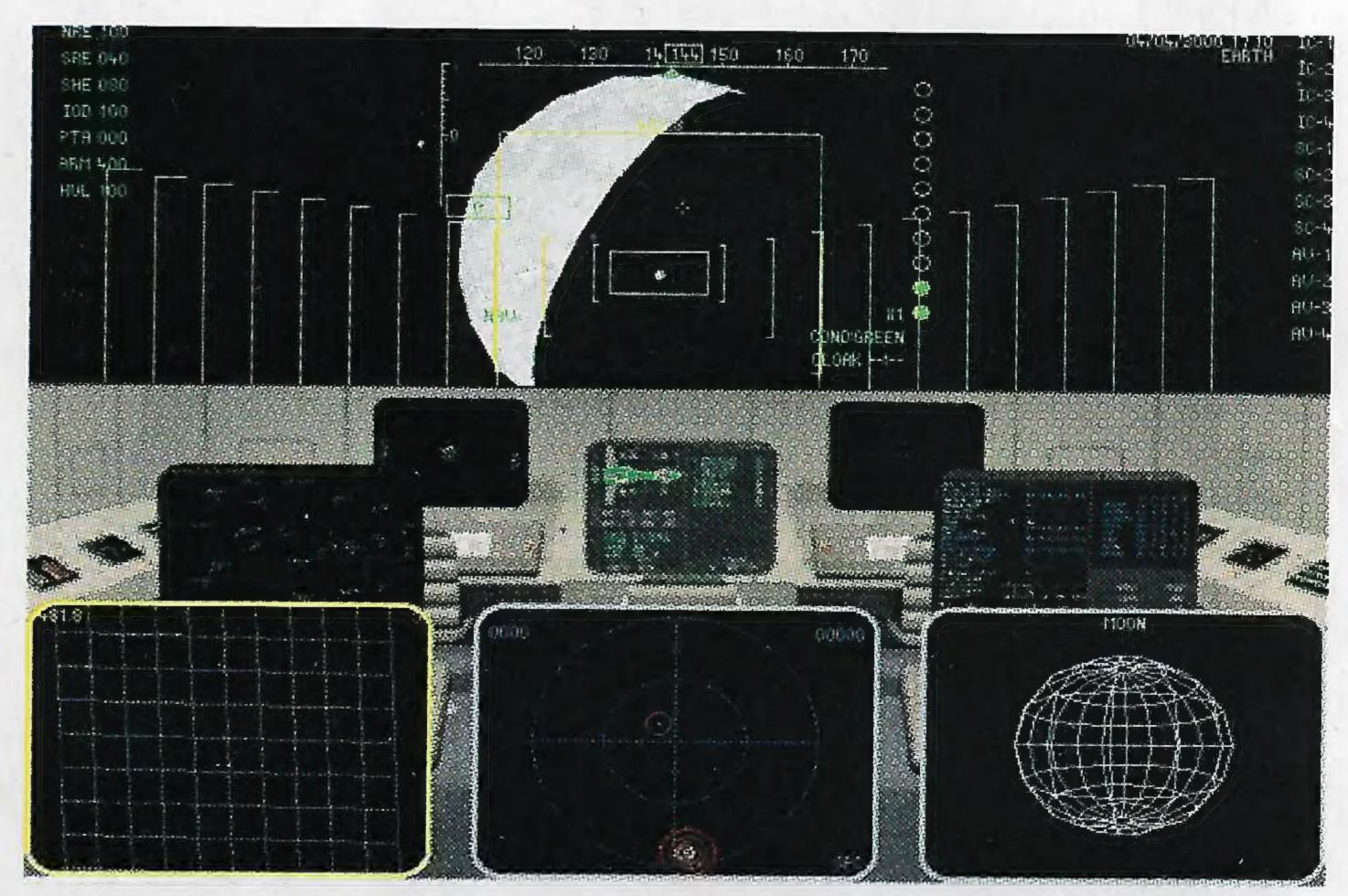
You assume the role of commander on a massive all-purpose, all-singing, all-dancing battlecruiser. Under your command are 125 able crew members who must be assigned to one of the many stations spread over five different decks. You can even customise your ship to give it better all-round capabilities. In all, there are 35 different ships and over 30 unique weapon systems. So you'll certainly have your hands full.

Battlecruiser 3000AD, funnily enough, takes place in that very year, where power hungry Gammulans (they're the Klingon types in this

Nice comfy chairs on the bridge. There really should be people in them during docking, though...

story) are about to conquer the galaxy. GAL-COM (the galaxy's organisation of free worlds) doesn't like this very much, so has assigned gifted commanders, like yourself, to wipe out those gammy Gammulans. Every inch of your gaming skill will be called upon to save the galaxy, which comprises of 225 planets and 25 star systems. Tense space dogfights feature heavily and ground attacks are also possible, you can jump into ATVs or join foot troops who battle with the aliens using *Moonraker*-style jet packs.

An enemy dies screaming. Yyyyyyyeeeeessssssss!

Your battlecruiser, on course for a landing on a small moon.

It brings to mind that old ELO song, doesn't it? No, not Horace Wimp.

As well as the most comprehensive battle system you're ever likely to come across, there's an *Elite* style trading angle that covers at least twice as many commodities than *Frontier – First Encounters*. You even get a cargo bay which stores thousands of tons worth of goodies – more than enough to make it big in the world of intergalactic Arthur Daleys. These ships are basically EEC butter mountains with warp capabilities! As you can probably tell – big is the name of the game.

Gammulans are not the only strangers in the game though, there a total of 12 alien species – all intelligent. Some are friendly, others aren't the sort of aliens you'd like to meet down a dark spaceport, but all of their characters depend on what threat you pose to the survival of their race; this is one of the most exciting aspects of the game.
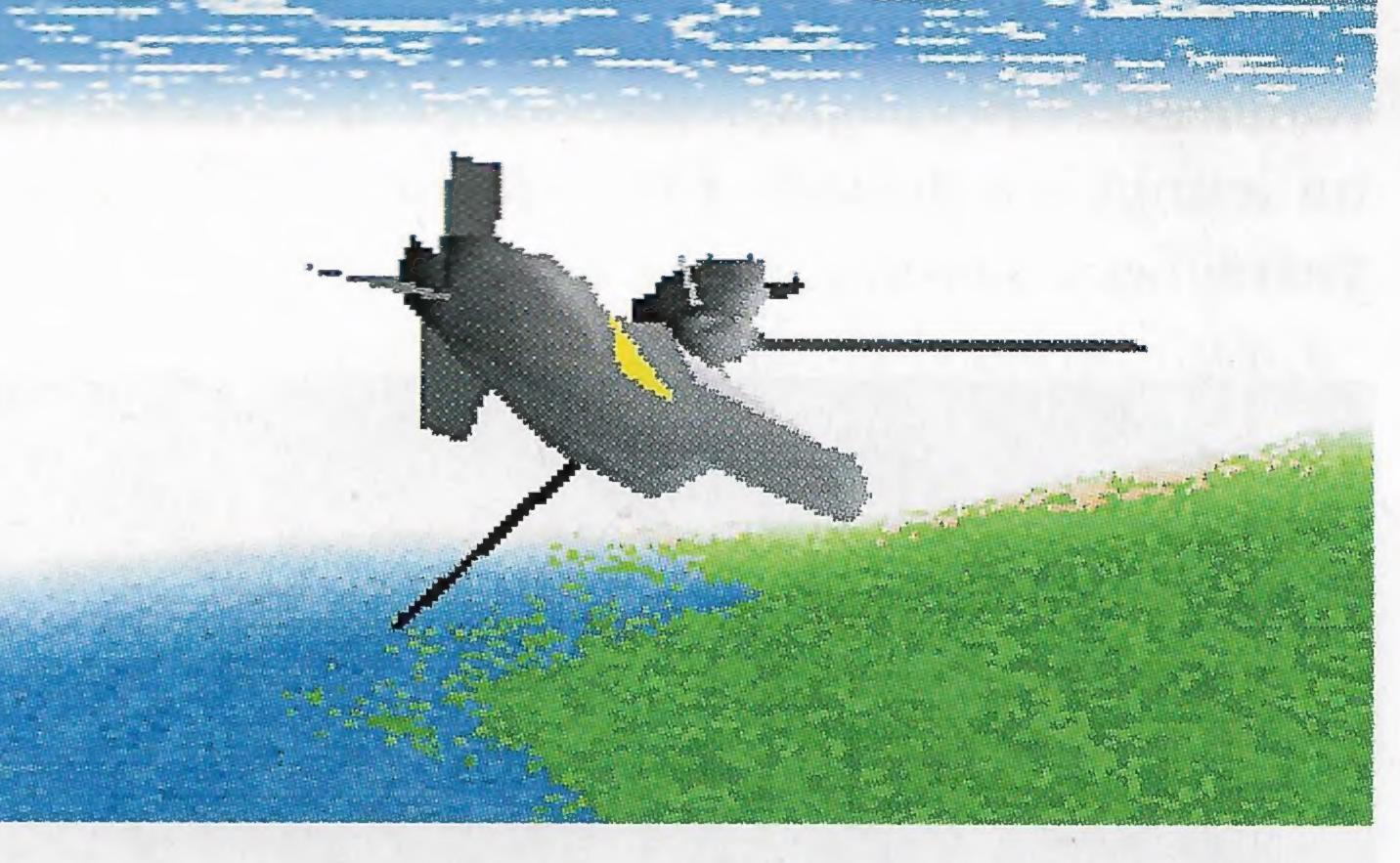
Battlecruiser 3000AD boasts the first ever 'neural' net based AI system, tipped to be one of the biggest advances yet in software entertainment. The neural routine has the capability of performing the simplest task, such as ejecting your pilot if the ship is near destruction, or determining whether an enemy pilot is likely

to attack your ship or turn tail and run; based on your location, weapon systems and personnel ratings. Take 2's CEO Ryan Brant described the system as "nothing short of remarkable," which is not surprising really, but even if it only contains half the amazing features it claims to, *Battlecruiser* will be one heck of game.

> **Battlecruiser 3000AD looks every inch the product of several years of blood, sweat and tears...**

Intelligence is important of course, but you can't have a space extravaganza without stunning graphics. Advanced 3-D modelling, texture mapping, light-sourcing, Gouraud and Phong shading all play a part in creating authentic looking spaceships. This is not just in the many rendered cinematic link-sequences either, the whole environment is presented in immaculate Super VGA and *Battlecruiser 3000AD* really does look spectacular, bringing
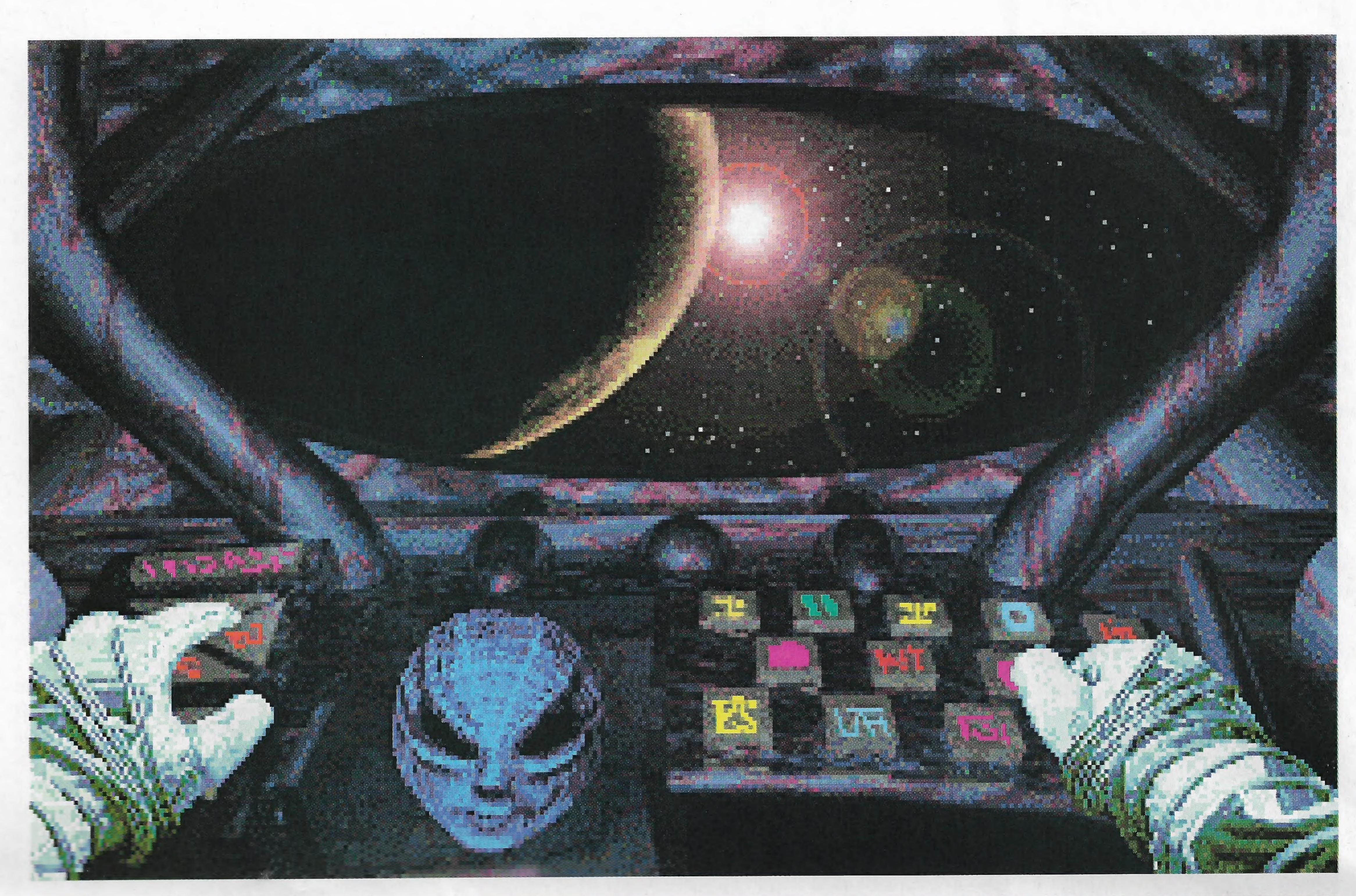
it in direct competition with *Wing Commander IV*. But what *WCIV* doesn't have is music orchestrated by George "The Fatman" Sanger, a larger than life individual who has previously worked on *Wing Commander*, *Indycar Racing* and *7th Guest*.
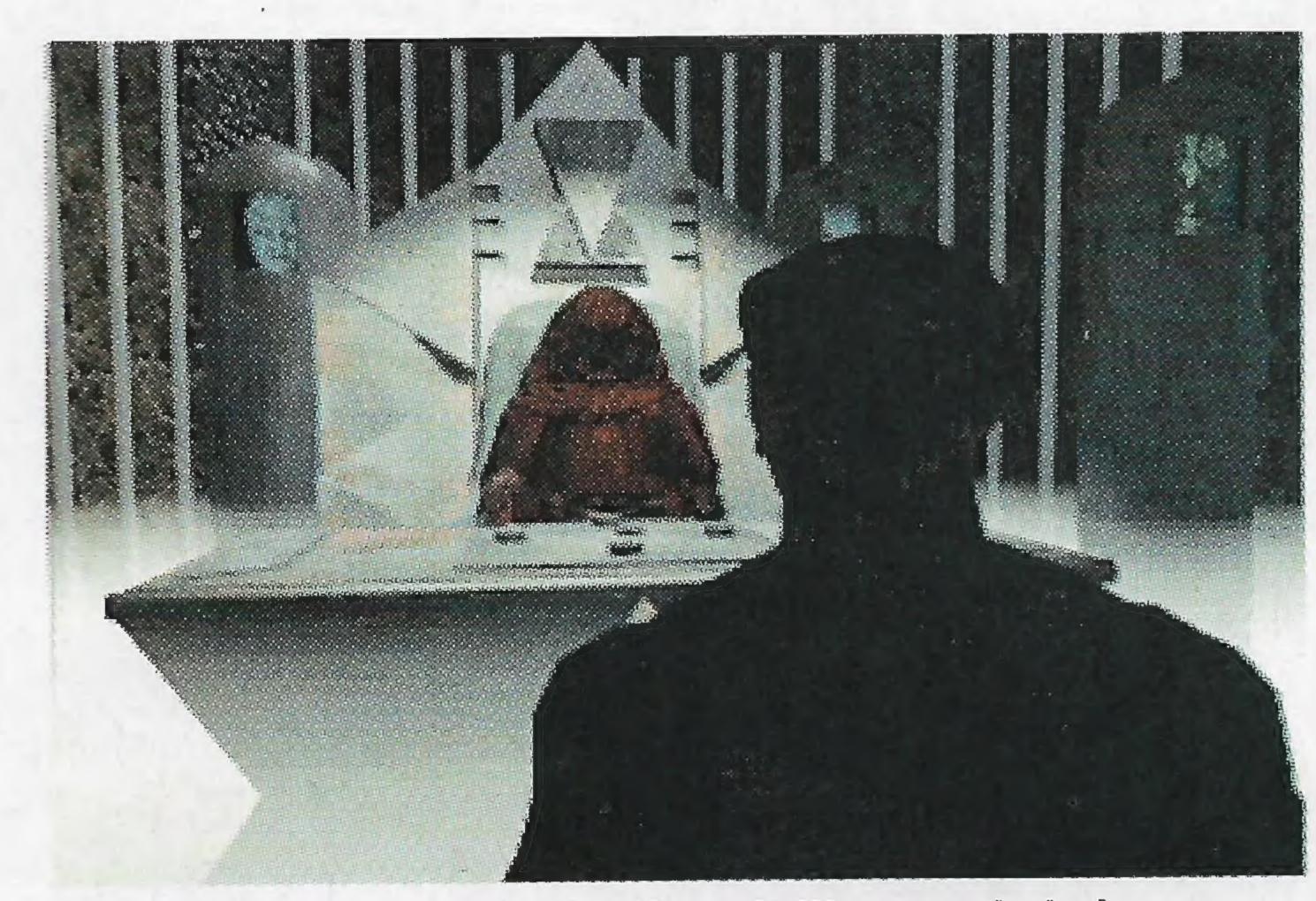
Like *Elite*, there is no set way to play *Battlecruiser 3000AD*. If you don't fancy risking life and limb for GALCOM, you can take your crew and indulge in more selfish activities. Gun running between the warring factions is one way to make money, as is doing the complete opposite and ferrying supplies and first-aid to those that need it on the front line. A hark back to the days when Paul Woakes' *Mercenary* offered the same type of adventures.

Battlecruiser 3000AD is mammoth in every sense of the word. The Americans never do things by half, and this game looks every inch the product of several years of blood, sweat and tears. **(!)**
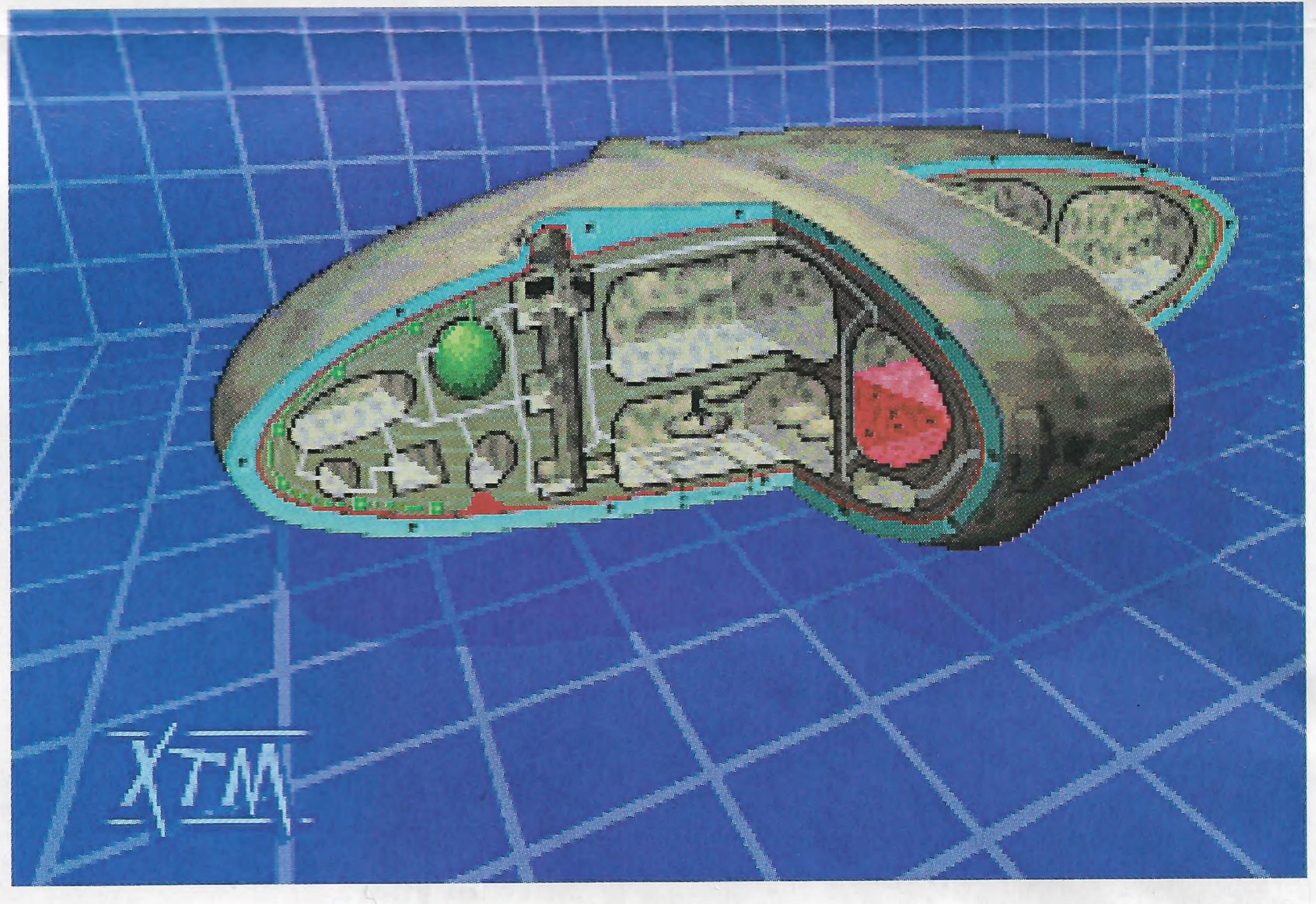
The scope for excitement in space is almost limitless, so in keeping with Gametek's current fascination with the stars, *Millennia* takes us on a time travelling adventure to save four species of peaceful aliens from the war-like ravages of the Microids. For those who have never watched *Sky at Night* with Patrick Moore, a millennia is a period of time lasting 1,000 years. See, clever.
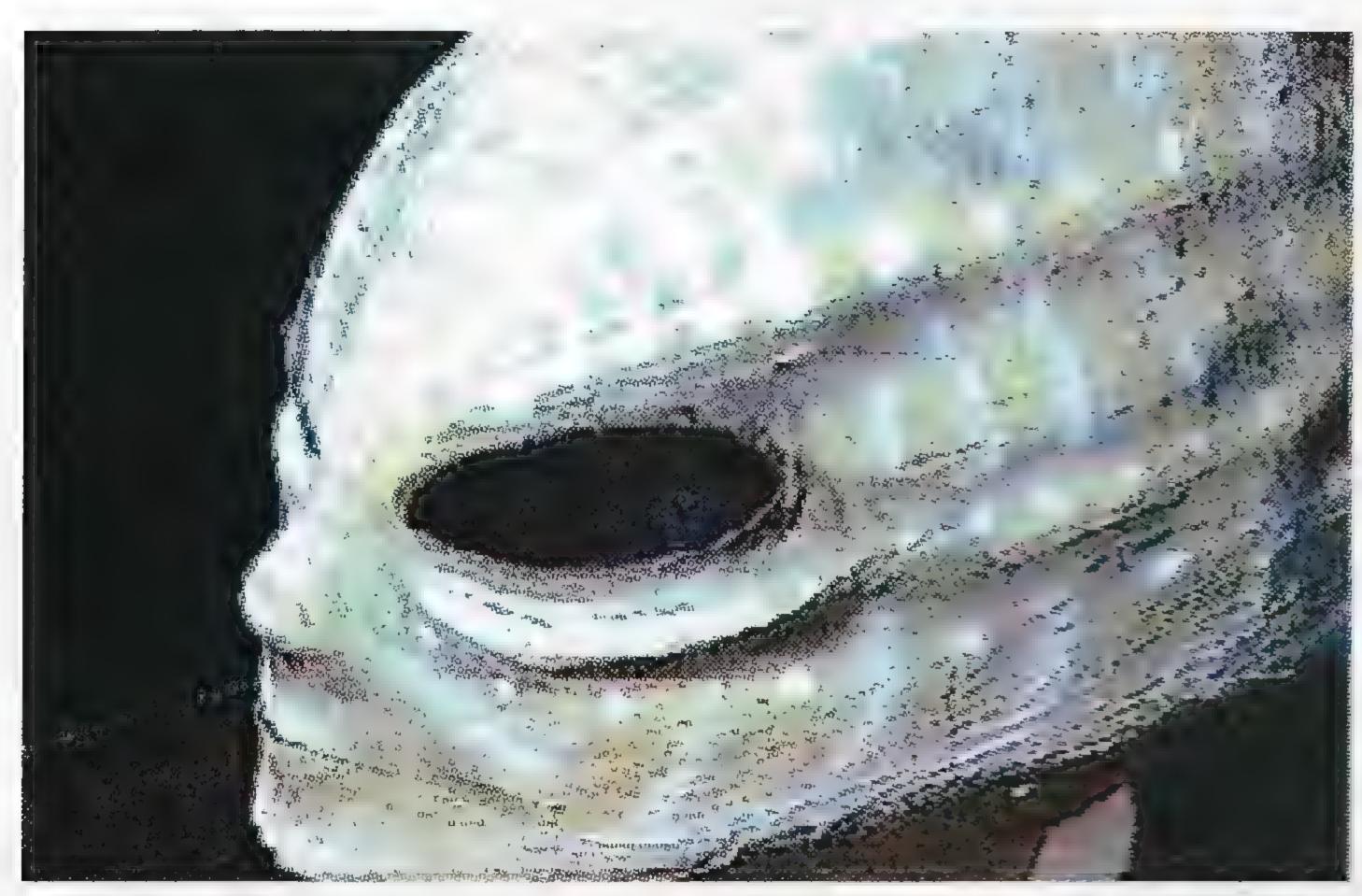

A vacancy comes up in the Kesprit III masonic lodge. Don't forget to roll up your trouser leg, mate!

release date **out now**

millennia: alt

Your mission is a simple one, at the end of this 1,000 year period the Microids take over the galaxy. So it's your task to alter the past and make the four local races strong enough to face the might of the Microids and obliterate them forever. A sort of UN peacekeeping force, but with the ability to actually do something other than look daft in white tanks.

Your mate Angus, a disembodied head who floats around between your legs. Hmmm.

Pinging backwards and forwards in time, your Delorean-type spaceship also carries with it the ability to fire probes and endure the odd dogfight or two. The space battles are *Rebel Assault* affairs with you moving a mouse pointer around the screen and zapping amazing texture-mapped flying saucers as they bear down on your craft.

Fighting also takes place on the planets, there's even a race of underwater lizard creatures who allow you to come and visit them with missiles and blow away their houses. *Millennia* is original and offers a host of weird and wonderful ways to manipulate the lives of aliens.

"I knew I shouldn't have eaten those mushrooms," moaned our intrepid space traveller.

As well as destroying things, you can be the ultimate God-like figure and create life. By utilising R&D, you can invent anything from the wheel to laser fusion and then transport them between a total of 100 worlds. Not only can you visit all these new planets, you can also discover a place known as the fifth dimension where you confront your own destiny. Nothing is as it seems and *Millennia* contains more than its fair share of mysterious secrets.

One of the many oddities in the game is your computer sidekick called Angus. This floating head looks more like a baseball than a computer, but nonetheless offers plenty of advice to guide you through those first few fumbling hours of gameplay. Angus follows you around constantly, no matter which of the many rooms in your spaceship you find yourself in, he'll be there flickering and bleating away like a trans-dimensional sheep.

Like all strategy games, *Millennia* will take aeons to get into and truly understand. The time travelling aspect is just one of the many systems you must master to triumph over the Microids and the game is aimed at anyone who is interested in time and its effects on civilisations. Steve Hawking might like a complimentary copy.

The worst thing you can say about *Millennia* is that it's impossible to determine if you like it in the shop. The game is far too vast to be sampled in one user friendly game-bite; and you can spend hours just discovering how the time machine works. *Millennia* is certainly not everyone's cup of tea, but if you don't try it then you'll never know. ()

A curiously pebble-like spaceship spurts forth a powerful energy beam.

release date **January '96**

escalation

Cool megadeath hardware is on gratuitous display in *Escalation*.

t is 1,132 years since the death of Hiluma, the third moon in the world of Kelra. Hiluma, or The Guiding Light, had been worshipped by many of the primitive societies of Kelra, and when it was thrown out of orbit a moral shadow was cast over the land; creating a dark era of violence and instigating the decline of art, science and technology. Bit of a bummer all round then. Over the past 500 years, the clans of bandits and murderers have gradually united into a series of powerful nation states, each struggling furiously to gain control of Kelra's valuable natural resources.

The simultaneous recent discovery of uncharted territory, New Kelra, by the two leading world powers has escalated into an unprecedented arms race. Primitive war technologies are rapidly progressing, along with the techniques of raw material extraction, energy and food production.
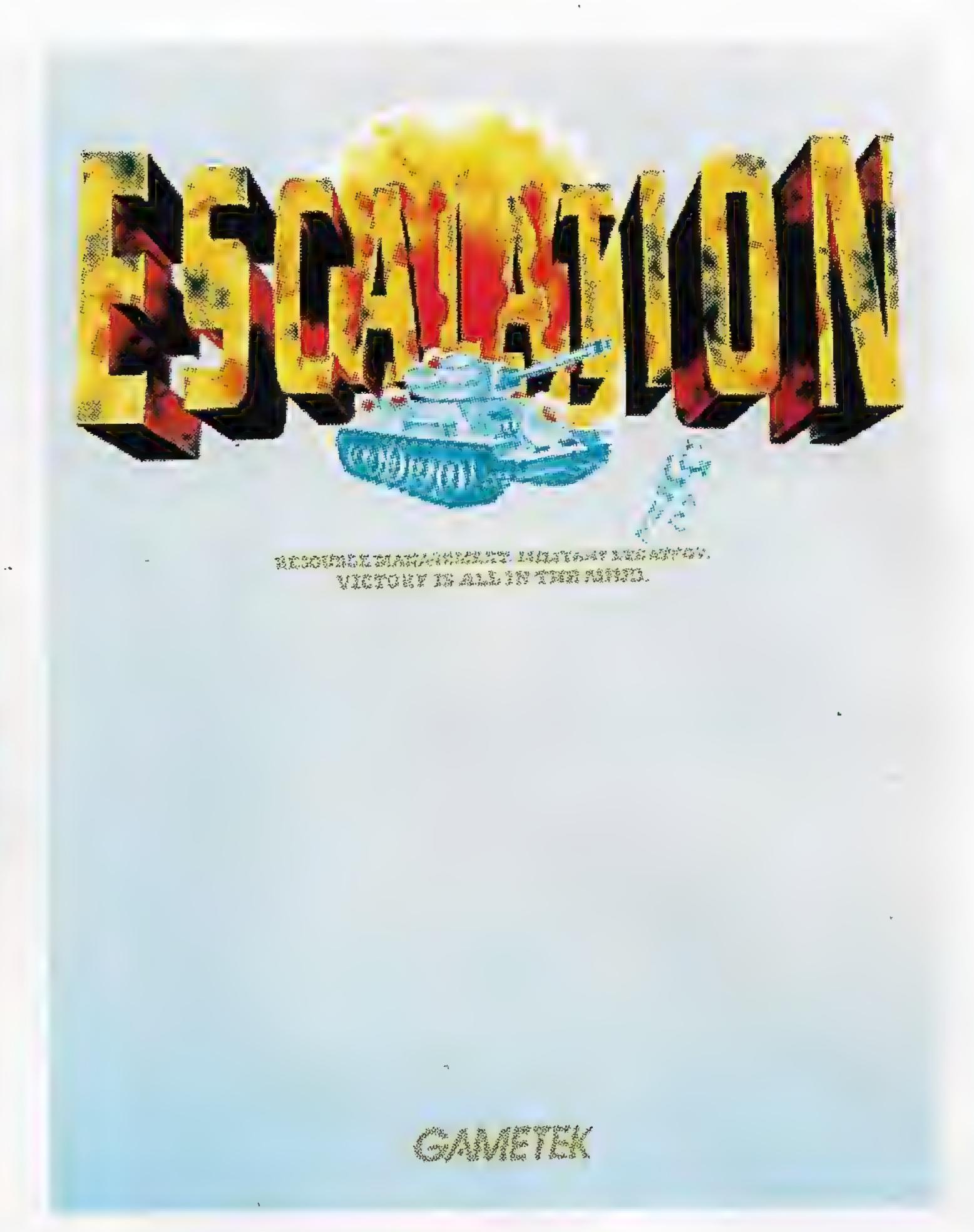
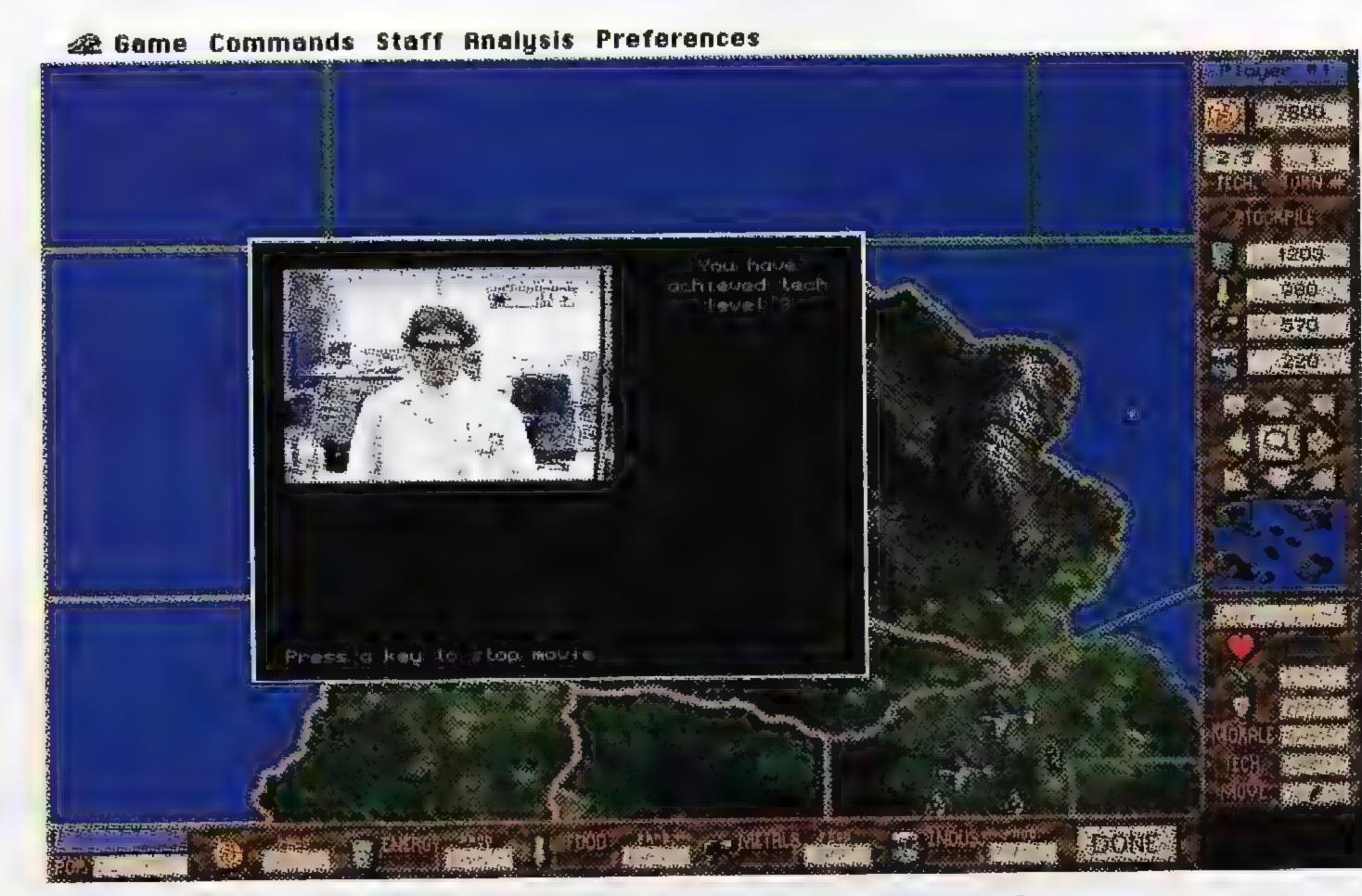Why do you need to know this? Because *Escalation* is a strategy game based upon the above scenario and revolving around resource management and military strategy. Players assume the role of the leaders, racing to develop superior technologies and military forces as they attempt to gain control of New Kelra.

The player is given full control over the military on a divisional level, with the ability to strategically locate military forces and specify offensive and defensive strategies. Additionally, control over an intelligence network allows the player to plan more carefully and sabotage opponents before preparing a strike. Finally, the player will take over the economies of the conquered territories, with the ability to invest in a number of areas, as well as finance a rapidly expanding military.

With the extensive resources of new lands at the player's fingertips, the escalation of military forces and technology will inevitably result in bloody warfare. The cunning use of espionage ensures a minimum of casualties and a new empire more powerful than anything seen before in the World of Kelra.

Escalation is turn-based, with each turn representing approximately one month. As many moves, attacks, missions or transactions as desired, can be performed in one turn. Additionally, at occasions during the enemy's turn, the player will need to respond to certain events such as incoming attacks.

There are over 20 different levels of weapon technology; video reports from generals, scientists, spies and advisors, and a graphic user interface makes play easy for novices and experts alike. For strategists with a penchant for a bit of all-out warfare, *Escalation* looks to be right up their street.

Marshalling your forces on one of the many map screens.

A white-coated boffin does his best Brains from *Thunderbirds* impression.

It's War! *The War College* is the sequel to *Universal Military Simulators I & II*, which were the best selling computer war games in history, apparently. From the same team, Intergalactic Development Inc, this game has been designed in response to numerous requests for the next generation of true simulation software. *The War College* is equally capable of modelling major historical battles of the past as it is at creating real-time simulations of current events. A war for all seasons it seems.

The basic disk contains five classic historic battles: Caesar v Pompeii at Pharsalus, Napoleon at Austerlitz, General Lee at Antietam, Hindenburg at Tannenburg, and a World War II Eastern Front tank battle. This provides a wide spread of eras, from 48 BC to 1914 AD in fact, and sets of expansion disks will become available, modelling mass battles from every period of history right up to the modern day.

Virtually unrecognisable from 1987's original *UMS*, *The War College* will be the only commercially available three-dimensional, solid modelled real-time military simulator. Each battle will come with a fully narrated interactive multimedia background and description, making it a must for those with a major interest in the history of warfare and aspiring dictators.

The War College promises to be extremely user-friendly, and will incorporate a graphic interface, pull-down menus, and a point 'n' click unit selection making it ideal for novices
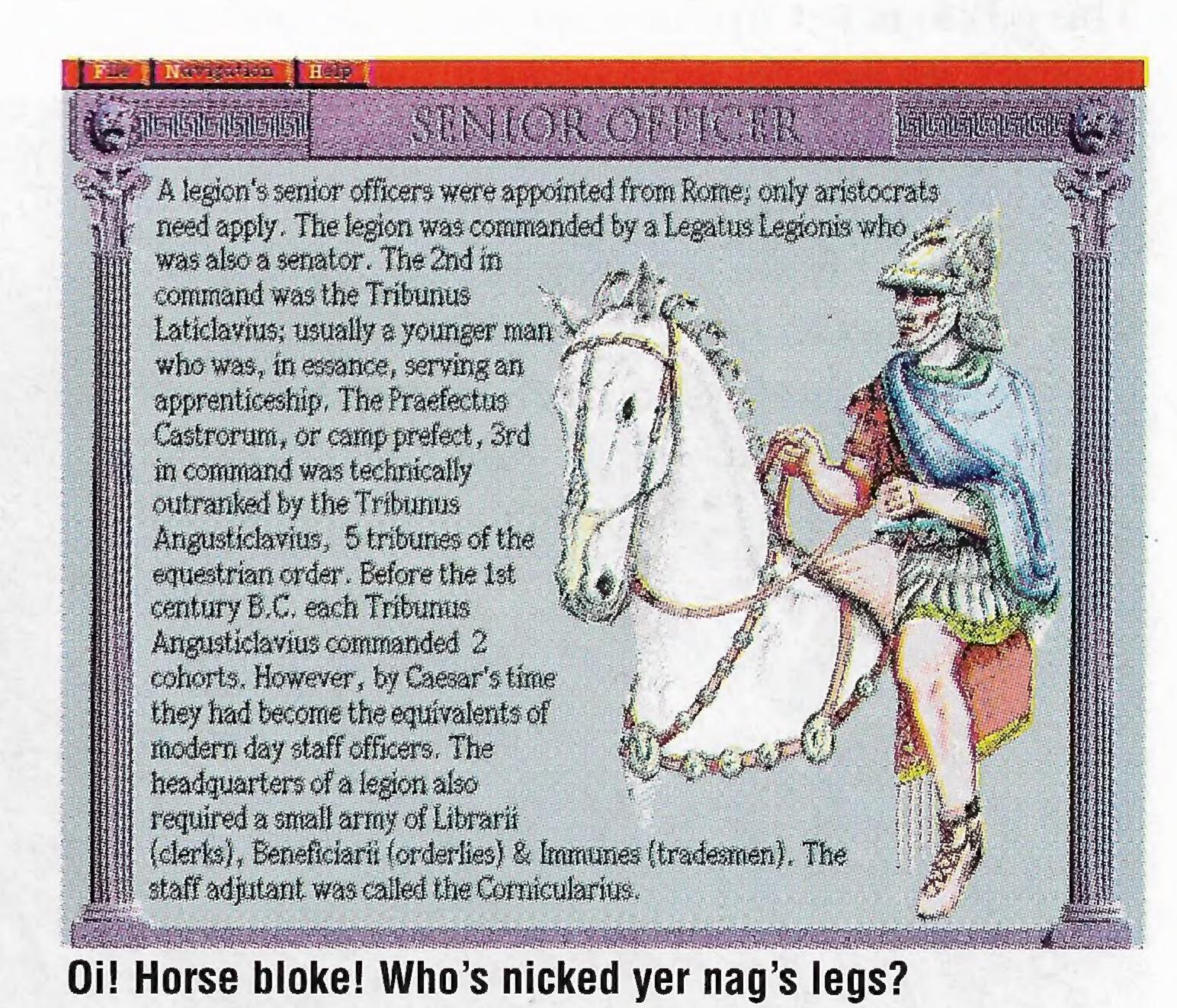

Maps, planning battles for the use of.
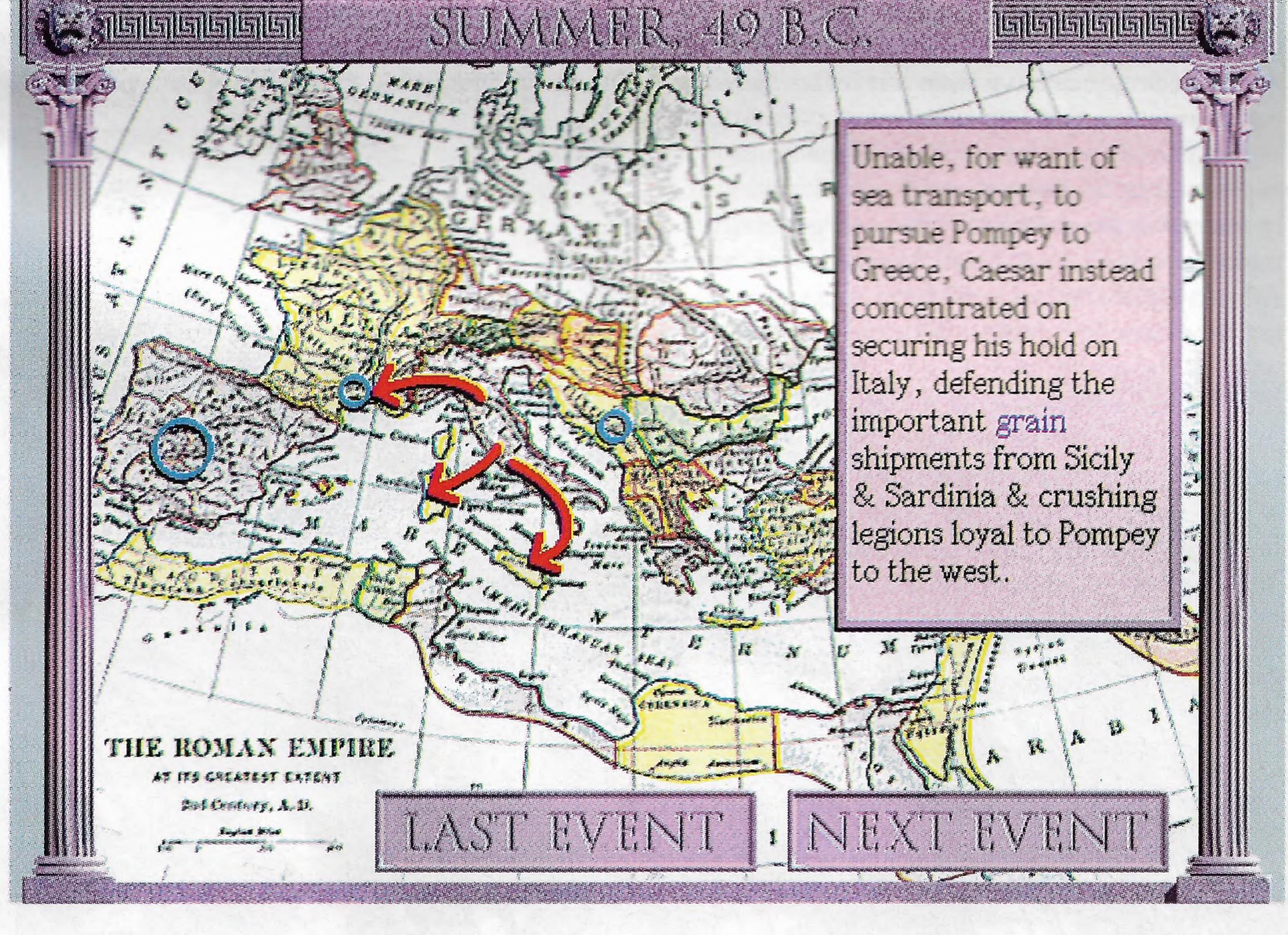
and experts alike. Graphically, there are embellishments such as cannon shells and clouds of smoke, making for a realistic warfare atmosphere. But it is the in-depth strategy which is the major selling point as it gives the player full power over his minions. Orders can

be given to individual units and there are a wide range of formations and tactics available. The action can also be zoomed out to administer directions en massé and the degree of control is exceptional.

So, whatever your historical leaning, you could be indulging in some tasty warfare in a variety of locations. Whether you're interested in the 13th century BC battle between the Hittites and the Egyptian army of Rameses II, or perhaps something a little more current, all tastes are catered for. Pull yourself a copy of *The War College* and you'll soon be dining at the Restaurant of Death. It's a messy bistro, with a bad reputation for soiling its customers clothing. We haven't seen a napkin now for *four* days. ⓟ
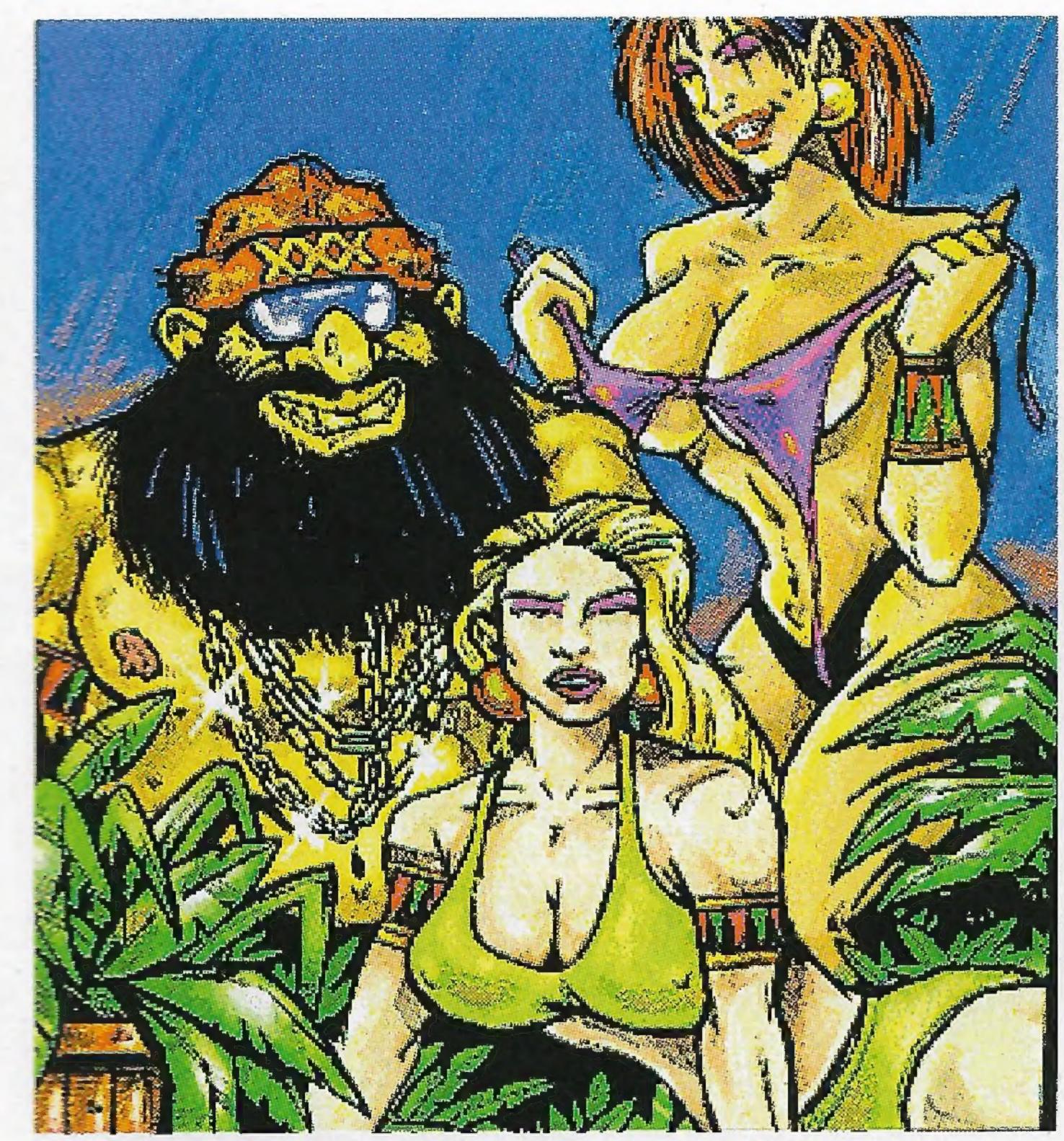

Oi! Horse bloke! Who's nicked yer nag's legs?

release date **January '96**

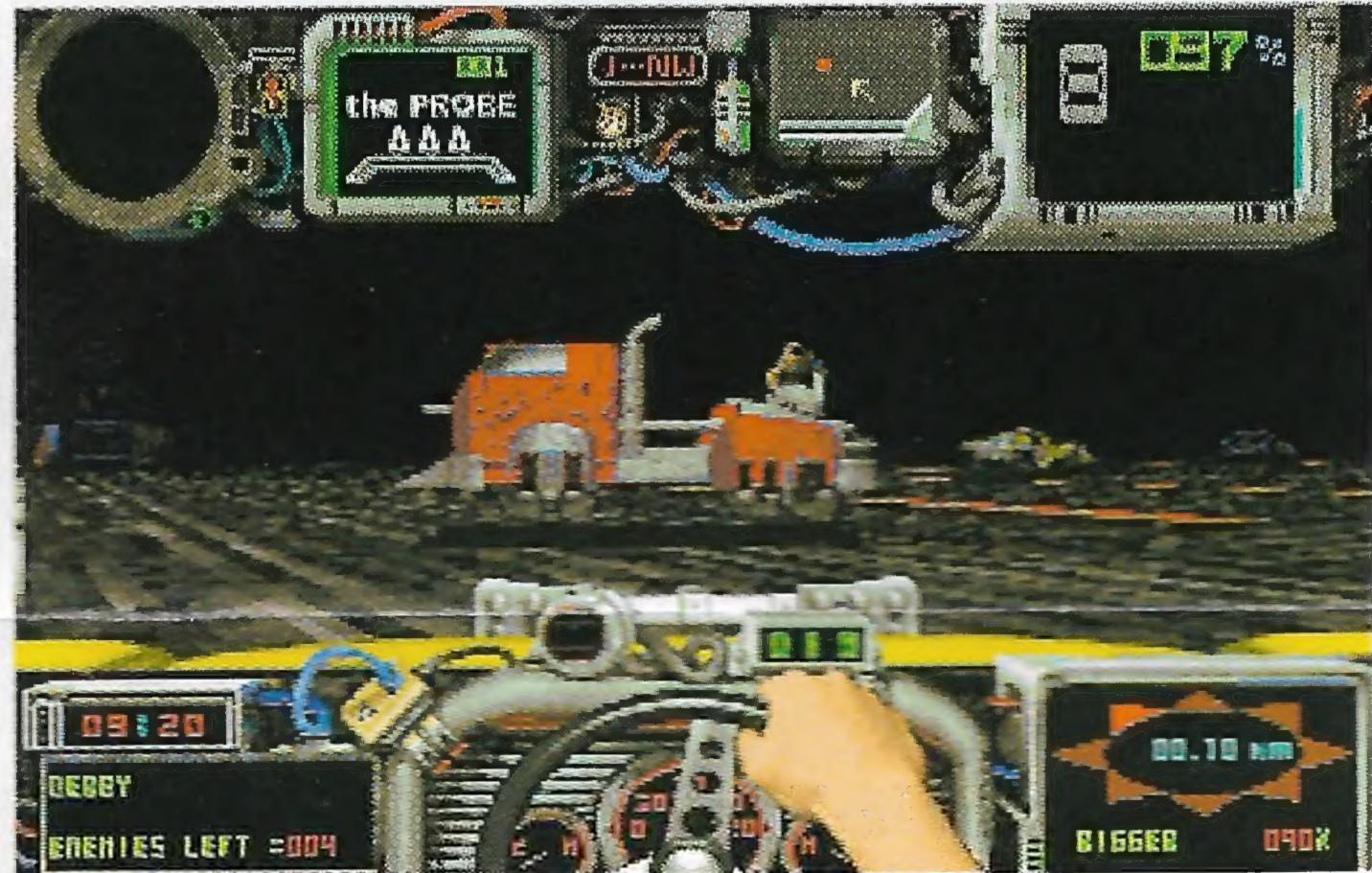# the war college

Hello, girls!

Deathrace 2000 is a film where Sylvester Stallone and David Carradine drive across a futuristic America running over old grannies for points, and fun. Quarantine is a game that came out last Christmas where you collect taxi fares and run over old grannies, for fun. Quarantine 2, subtitled Road Warrior, looks to have been directed

This must be a bad area if even the fire engines have their wheels nicked.

by Quentin Tarantino and now not only allows you to run over grannies, but also impale them on the bonnet and keep them as trophies. The game is set in the wastelands outside of Kemo City which means wide open spaces, road gangs, and yes you've guessed it, more innocent civilians to terrorise.

You play Drake Edgewater, an agent who was sent into Kemo City to destroy Omnicorp and liberate the prison from its evil oppressors in the original Quarantine. Now you're free

The hero pulls up at a motorway service station to have some overpriced tea and a gander at the top shelf.

and at a bit of a loose end, you decide to ride off into the sunset for a well earned break. However, the big boss and owner of Omnicorp from the first game is still alive and now he's really pissed, so you're immediately captured and forced to play Mad Max-style gladiatorial games in your vehicle until you can escape and join the resistance.

Owners of Quarantine will instantly feel at home as the cab is still the same (well it would be wouldn't it; cars don't just change mid-game) and those dangerously high-speed cornering techniques have been left intact. What has changed is that you can now play in full Super VGA (if you have a beefy PC with a cape and big 'S' painted on it) which obviously improves the detailed levels and generally makes the game look even more fab. You can still play it in low-res mode, but it is surprising how dowdy it looks after you've played it with all the graphical bells and whistles.

RW also features more enemies, multiple camera angles, including a back seat view, some terrific Manga-style cartoon interludes to explain the plot twists, and of course a much bigger playing area than Quarantine – ten new areas to be exact. Taxi weapons have also been

tweaked to include a really effective flame-thrower that turns all available bi-peds into Roman candles – they even dance around before turning to ash – excellent!

The big draw of RW is that you get all the blood and sick humour of the original game but instead of being confined to one city, there are many – all with different graphics and populations. You have to travel to each one through perilous atomic wastes filled with testosterone pumped gangs of banjo-playing misfits. RW is certainly a challenge, and if you liked the first game, check it out. ℗
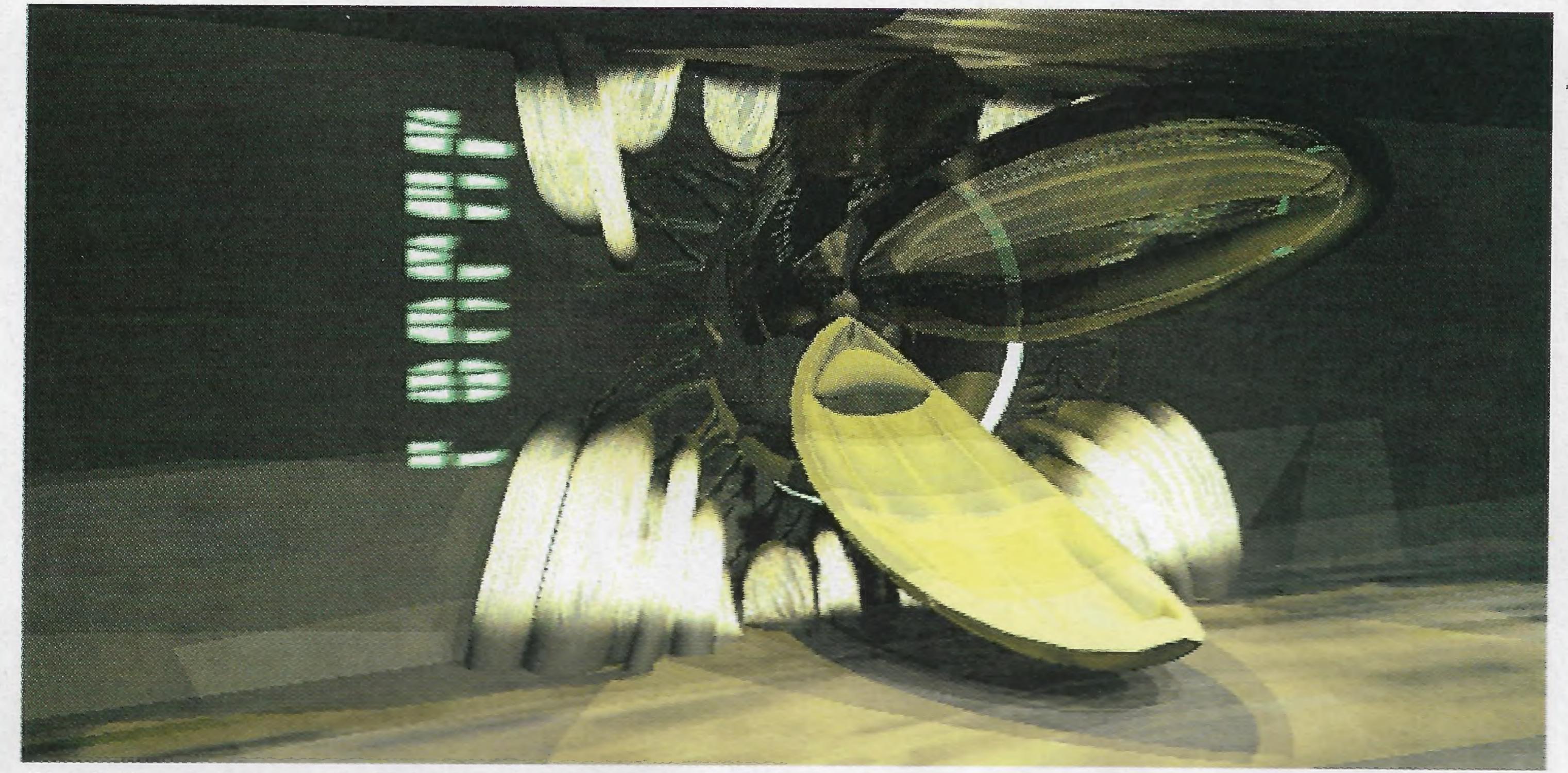

Sarf of the river? This time of night? Can't break a twenty, mate.

release date **out now**

quarantine 2: road warrior

abduction

Weird alien stuff ahoy with *Abduction*. Is that a door, or a tulip?

Those pesky aliens are at it again; they always seem to be nabbing someone don't they? First it was Christopher Walken in *Communion*, then those drunken rednecks in *Fire in the Sky*, even the mountainous Scully was added to the list of those "taken in action" in a recent *X-Files* episode. Now Gametek has a game which puts you in the shoes of a guy called Aguro who suddenly gets abducted in Tokyo by 'the Greys' as they are known in geeky circles, and whisked off into space.
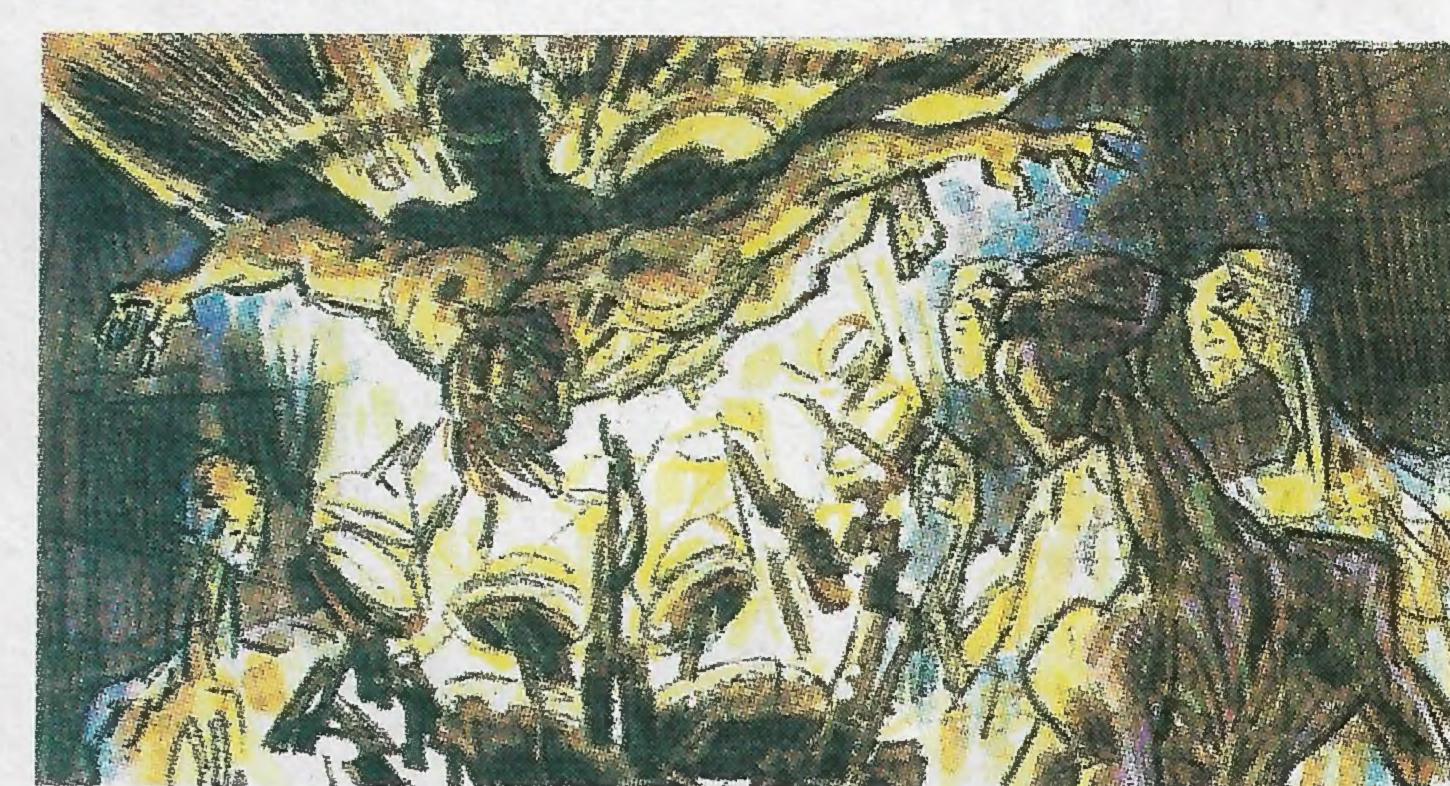
As the space ship tears itself from Earth's orbit, Aguro is experimented on and observed by the aliens (no clues as to what they look like, but that girl out of *Fairground Attraction* must be a good bet) who eventually drop him off on an alien planet and then disappear. Great, and you forgot to take that video you rented back to Blockbuster, can you imagine the fine!

Abduction is a point 'n' click adventure which uses the now standard 3-D rendered backgrounds to depict the alien ship interior and the planet that Aguro finds himself stranded on. Naturally this means tons of strange statues, weird sculptures and the feeling that you are constantly being watched.

Not much is known about the actual gameplay, as this game is so far off, but there will be fully sampled speech (what does partly sampled speech sound like?) and loads of characters to interact with. The real chal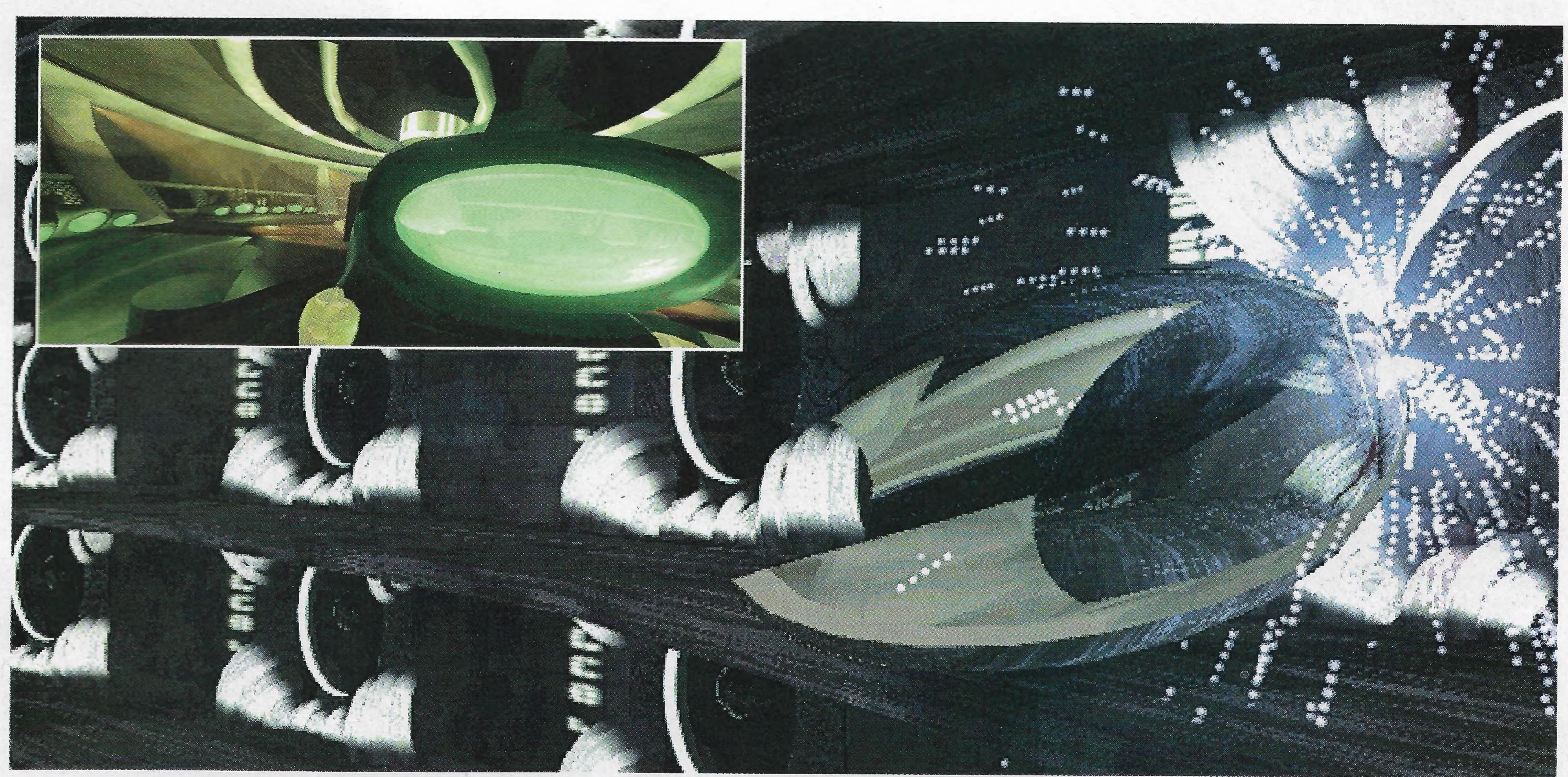lenge though is to survive the alien environment and find a way back to Earth, perhaps by fooling the Greys into giving you a lift to Warminster, a place where aliens are meant to stop for a bit of a chin-wag on the way back to Zeta Reticuli, so the guys on *Encounters* magazine tell me (£2.99, out now).

Inspired by films such as *Close Encounters* (you can't get any closer than being abducted though) and the aforementioned *Communion*, *Abduction* looks to be an intriguing game with plenty of potential if produced right, especially with the current alien buzz over programs like the *X-Files* and the *Roswell Incident*. All we've got on it so far are some sketches and a few preliminary screen shots of the alien craft, see what you think and we'll have more news on *Abduction* soon. Watch PC POWER! ◗

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